

# Evolution of Organic Organizations in a Changing World



# The Seven of Pentacles - Marge Piercy



# Beginnings - 1988

- Washington Tilth Producers
- Washington State Department of Agriculture.
- Role of Organic Advisory Board
- Public service, Trust and Commitment
- 63 farms - intimate



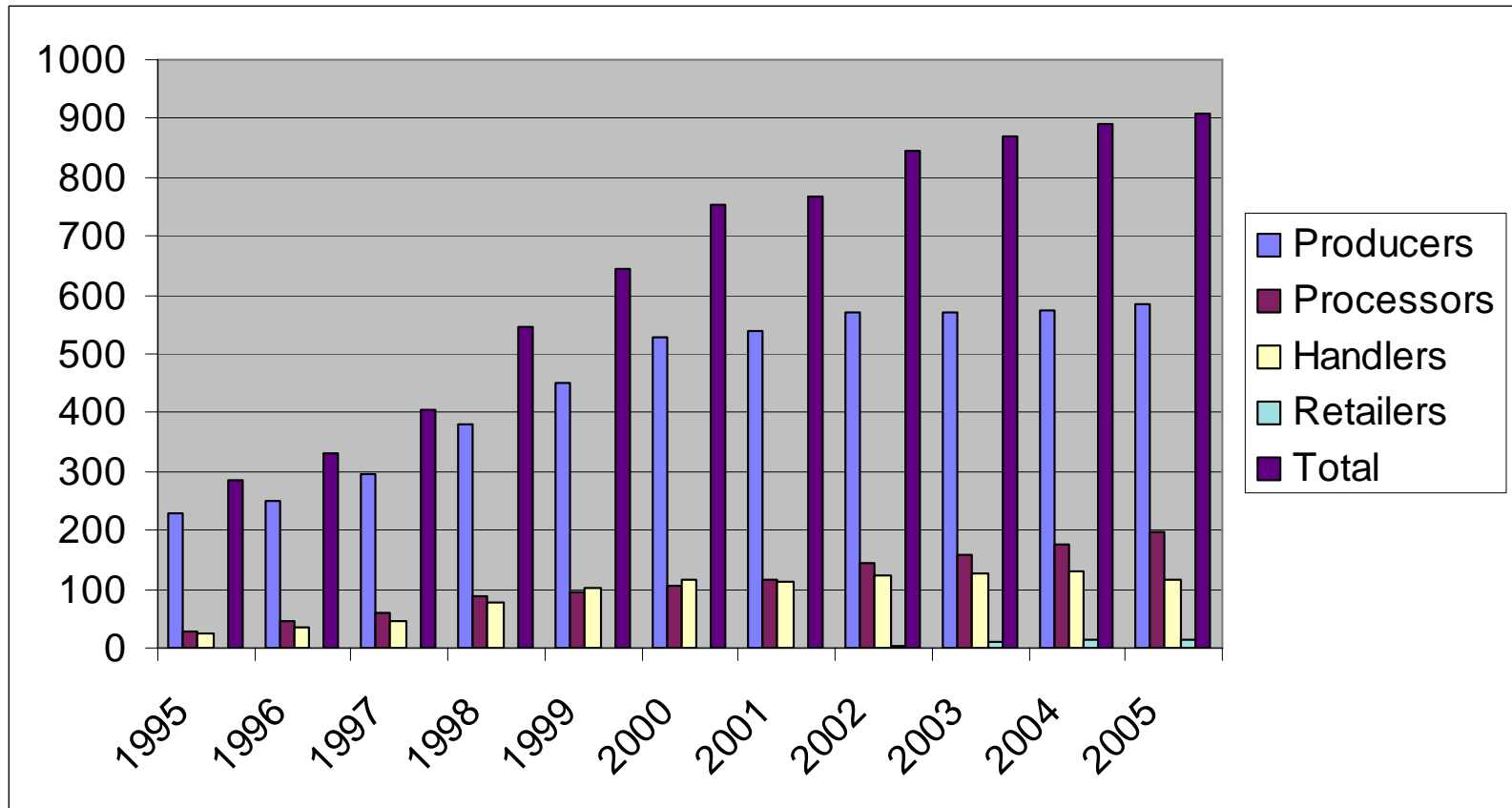


# Interlude - 1989-1995

- Alar controversy and the loss of innocence
- Standards development - organic livestock, processing
- US Organic Food Production Act
- EEC 2092/91

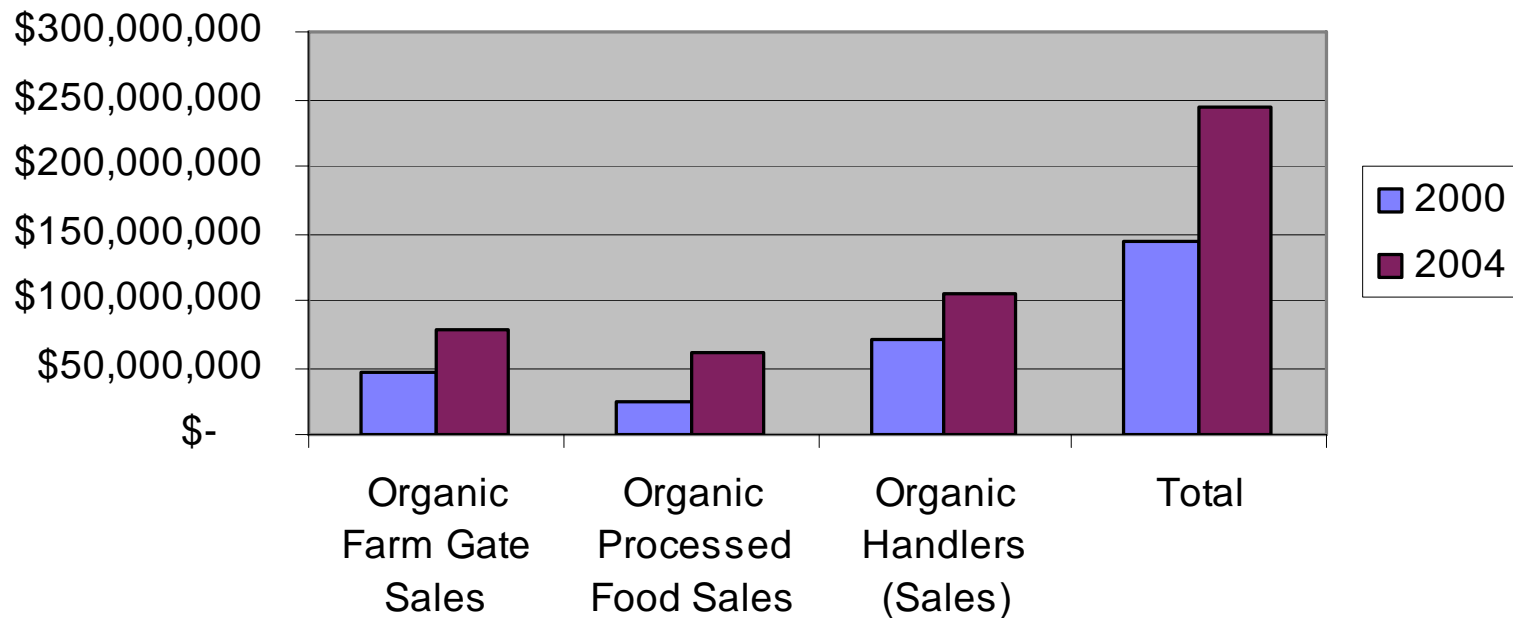


# Number of WSDA Certified Organic Operations 1995-2005



# Washington State Organic Food Sales 2000-2004

**Value of Organic Products Sold 2000-2004**



# Here and Now - 2006

- Organic production has increased one hundred fold since 1988 from \$2.5 million to over \$250 million in sales
- Accounts for 2% of state's agricultural production
- 5% of apples, pears
- Limited production of cattle, potatoes, nursery crops (less than 0.1%)





# **Institutional Support**

Washington State Department of Agriculture

Organic Food Program

Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program

Washington State University

Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Organic Agriculture degree

Organic research – BioAg and Organic

6 Certified Organic Agricultural Research Stations



# Non governmental agencies



- **Tilth Producers**
- **Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network**
- **Puget Sound Fresh**
- **The Food Alliance**
- **Farmers Market Assoc.**
- **Heart of Washington**

# Role of Government



Government can be a good ally in supporting organic agriculture.

Persistence needed in order to gain supportive policies and financial resources.

Government can be a barrier to organic agriculture.

# What's needed



**More technical assistance and research**

**Support of smaller scale farms and processors that keep money in the community.**

**Organic Certification Cost Share Program**

**Support for local marketing (farmers markets, direct sales of livestock products, certified organic slaughter facilities, small scale processing facilities)**



# Organic Standards

- Standards need to be amendable to better understanding of farming systems
- Science based decision making
- Synthetic substance should not be disregarded just because they are synthetic

A metal windmill stands in a field under a clear blue sky. The windmill has multiple blades and a tall, lattice-like tower. The background shows a flat landscape with some bare trees in the distance.

# NASDA/NASOP Organic Policy Statement

Protect organic growers, consumers and markets

- Full and consistent implementation of the NOP
- Improved cooperation and communication between states and USDA-NOP
- Increased funding for USDA-NOP
- Federal funding to states so that they can assist with NOP implementation, consumer protection and local enforcement



# NASDA/NASOP Organic Policy

## Statement – Markets and Marketing



- **Targeted market assistance to small and medium sized organic growers**
- **Inclusion of organic as a defined commodity in USDA market promotion programs**
- **Funding for better information on organic market price data, organic imports and export sales**



# NASDA/NASOP Organic Policy Statement – Research

Increased funding for:

IFAFS, Organic Transitions Program, SARE

Creation of a National Program Leader for Organic  
Agriculture within CSREES

Support staff participation in organic professional  
development and outreach



# NASOP Farm bill recommendations

- Organic Certification Cost Share Program
- ISO compliant NOP rule
- Authorize funding for State Organic Programs





